

Narragansett - URI Coalition

“Building a community of mutual respect”

Meeting Minutes Tuesday – September 19, 2006 7:00PM Narragansett Town Hall

SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

The following subcommittees met prior to the full Coalition meeting:

- Communications (Chair: Jim Hurton)
- Realtors/Neighborhood Association (Co-Chairs: Kim and Kara Churas)
- Programming (Chair: Leslie Williams)
- Common Ground (Chair: Nancy Devaney)

Co-Chairman Tom Dougan started the meeting at 7:00 PM and introduced the new moderator Ryan Battis. Ryan is a Junior from New Jersey and lives in Narragansett. Ryan thanked the Steering Committee for this opportunity and stated he hoped to fill the role as well as his predecessor Ben Matone. He reviewed meeting guidelines and asked everyone to be respectful of others. He reviewed the agenda and introduced Dr. Mark Wood, Principal Investigator of Common Ground and Fran Cohen, Dean of Students. Ryan asked that all questions be held until the Open forum.

Guest presenters

Mark Wood - Common Ground Update

- Granted \$25,000, in partnership with the Narragansett Youth Task Force, to support increased enforcement by Narragansett Police
- Continuation of media campaign “Rhodemap to Safety” focusing on increased strength of laws (.02, .08, DUI, Social Host) and expectations of student behavior living in the local communities
- Sponsored an Alcohol Retail Summit which took place today at the North Beach Club House. Included national speakers, a progressive responsible beverage service bar owner, local legislators. Summit was followed by an ID workshop led by Scott Velone from Narragansett PD and Tony Balbi from the SK police department
- On-campus initiative with Greek community supporting their commitment to scholarship, leadership and philanthropy
- Working with the Coalition, police department, neighborhood associations to address the issues of party houses

Fran Cohen – Student Life Update

Fran stated that the University continues its commitment to the growth, welfare, and safety of its students and the residents of Narragansett. Many of these efforts have been supported by Common Ground grant funding. She referred participants to the prepared yellow sheet which outlines the many initiatives undertaken during the past few years and proposed for the future. She highlighted the following:

- Intense education effort geared at the commuter student
- First night – campus-wide alcohol free event held at the beginning of the fall semester
- Fraternity and Sorority focus on core values
- Community Liaisons
- Alcohol Edu for all incoming freshmen
- Rhody Rides
- Hot Line

- Meetings with student, parents, realtors, property owners, police
- Parental notification
- Off-campus jurisdiction
- “Bee” a good neighbor campaign
- Joint policy with PD on retaliation (on back of yellow document)
- Workshop for first years students to prepare them for off-campus living

Steering Committee Report

New Goals: Co-Chair Tom Dougan reviewed the Coalition’s three main areas of focus:

- To improve the quality of life in all neighborhoods for all residents
- To develop and implement environmental methods that impact college student drinking and reduce the harmful consequences within the Narragansett community
- To increase the awareness, community involvement and support of the Coalition’s work

Consistent with the above, the following three goals were approved for the 06-07 academic year:

- 1. Explore, improve and articulate the application of the student code of conduct to off-campus students.** *(to make clear to both students and residents what the code means and how it applies to off-campus students.)*
- 2. Increase the participation of residents in the coalition**
- 3. Increase the participation of students in the subcommittees**

In addition, Dr. Dougan informed the members of the following proposed activities:

The creation of an ombuds team.

The formation of a presentation team. This team would go out to interested groups in Narragansett who wish to learn more about the work of the Coalition. A tentative presentation is scheduled for the Bonnet Shores Fire District.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The moderator called for reports from the subcommittee chairs.

COMMON GROUND – CHAIR NANCY DEVANEY REPORTING:

- Summit held today as previously mentioned by Mark Wood during which alcohol retailers met with local legislators to seek increased penalties for violators who misrepresent age through the use of false identification;
- Judicial representation is needed on the subcommittee. The judicial branch needs to hear the concerns of the community relative to their metering out punishment.
- Proposal to set up a meeting with URI administrators, the town council and police department to strategize more cohesively the utilization of funds in order to address tensions within Narragansett.
- Both Carol Stuart and Doug Wardwell questioned the lack of Narragansett Association representation. Nancy responded that this was a request from the subcommittee to bring together the key decision makers and a report will be made back to the full Coalition.

COMMUNICATIONS – DORIE LAWSON REPORTING:

- Reviewed the Coalition’s three goals for 06-07 to determine how the subcommittee can contribute to their implementation
- Assist in bringing groups together within the coalition
- Continue some form of communication from the Coalition to the community like the “coalition corner”; probably more in the form of op eds or letters to the editor
- Publicize code of conduct
- Inform community about ombuds and presentation teams
- Support efforts of RhodeMap to Safety campaign

- Tom shared that the town is putting together evacuation plans and it is often difficult to get the addresses of students living in Narragansett. He appealed to the students for help. The chief added that if there is a major some bearing down on the area it is critical they be able to reach all residents including the students. Kim Churas from Lila Delman Realty can certainly provide this information to her renters. Carol shared that she was asked by Jeanne Lane of Lane Realty what to do with the cards she collects from her renters that contains this information.

PROGRAMMING – LESLIE WILLIAMS REPORTING

- Updated police reports on the the table in the back.
- “Bee a good neighbor” campaign was initiated in Eastward Look in collaboration with the Eastward Look Property Owners Association during celebration of Neighborhood Day on Sunday, September 17th. Carol acknowledged the outstanding work of Mary Fell and Karen Ferrandi for making the event a success. About 75 people participated; approximately one third students. ELPOA appreciated Tom Dougan’s and the university’s participation. Bags which were handed out on the 17th were made available to participants in this evening’s meeting. They contained informational packets on how to “BEE a Good Neighbor,” which gave ideas for students on how to introduce themselves to their neighbors, and suggested students give neighbors their contact information in case of a disturbance. The pamphlets also mentioned how to keep property clean and host an undisruptive party. Possibly extend Neighborhood Day to other neighborhoods next year.
- Goals for 06-07 include:
 - ...Adding more residents to the subcommittee
 - ...Fall and spring food drives
 - ...Spring clean-up
 - ...Possibility of sponsoring a holiday lights competition in local neighborhoods with prizes

REALTORS/NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS – CAROL STUART REPORTING

- New co-chairs Kim and Kara Churas
- How acquaintances are made between new neighbors varies across neighborhoods.
- Clarification of role of students on subcommittee
- Students are welcome to come to neighborhood association board meetings
- Police have been proactively visible in the community
- Eastward Look has had a rash of vandalism and although not attributable to URI students, the permanent residents feel violated.
- Noise complaints are down
Discussion pursued and is moved into the Open Forum.

OPEN FORUM

- Steering Committee Paul Haas explained the proposed “ombuds” program. He stated that the mission of this team is to meet with and provide interventions as able to aggrieved parties in Narragansett. Some individuals may not be familiar with the structures in place to mitigate problems and this process will assure individuals that they are being listened to and that there is a team willing to help them. A formal proposal will be reviewed at the next Steering Committee meeting (10/3).
- Paul also suggested that a Summit be hosted at the Towers by the university president. Paul announced that there will be an experimental “road show” starting with Bonnet Shores, then to the central and southern areas of Narragansett.
- The chief stated that what was so apparent at today’s Alcohol Retailer’s Summit is how much can get done when there is full participation from all stakeholders. He affirmed the participation of members of his force in subcommittees, their willingness to answer questions and resolve problems and to arrest when there is probable cause. He acknowledged how outstanding his crew is and it is doing the best that it can in the community.
- He announced that Ron Lepre Community Housing Officer has taken a new position as Chief of the West Greenwich Police Department. He hopes this position will be filled soon.
- Hundreds of parking violations have been issued.

- 3 students uprooted a street sign and will be charged criminally. They will also be referred to URI's judicial system.
- He appreciates everyone's cooperation and understanding of law enforcement's unique role in the community.
- A resident stated that it appeared that Newport was more proactive in dealing with their student problems than Narragansett. The chief informed the audience that many police departments throughout the state including Newport have visited Narragansett as a model for improving their enforcement practices especially with local colleges.
- Another resident stated he was astonished that the university did not have the addresses of student renters. Dr. Dougan replied that he is seeking help to resolve this. The university has addresses of those students who provide it and those who rent through realtors but not others. Most often, the student supplies the permanent home address. Neil Cavanaugh, Student Senate President, stated that he preferred to provide his home address for important university information. He offered that he will work with the student senate and possibly come up with a policy to get this important information.
- Ben Matone, Student Senate Chair of External Affairs asked that the Steering Committee consider scheduling a Coalition meeting on campus. He would like to expose the community to the campus but more importantly to let on-campus students learn more about what goes on in the community. A resident strongly supported this idea.
- Coalition Coordinator, Paula Santos, stated, that to support the Coalition's goals of increased involvement, there was a sign up sheet in the back table. If anyone was interested in joining a subcommittee or just participating in an activity, please sign up.
- Carol Stuart who is a 27 year resident of Eastward Look does not like the negativity about her neighborhood. Despite the changing face of Eastward Look with an increase of rental properties, the ELPOA has taken the lead in promoting good neighbor relations.
- Steering Committee member Doug Wardwell and president of the Narragansett Property Owners Association and the Village of Point Judith reiterated the value of the neighborhood associations and the permanent residents and the need to recognize their long term presence in the community and to include them in major decision making.
- One resident stated that he believes it is important to intervene with your neighbor if the situation is creating a disturbance; talk to your neighbor before going to the police. He understood the student might be unaware of the noise they are creating and that it may not warrant the orange sign on the student's front door posted by police after a party is broken up. Senate President Cavanaugh agreed but pointed out that sometimes that may be difficult for a more senior resident who may be intimidated.
- One student expressed frustration that he feels he is not treated with respect by his neighbors. He wants to introduce himself but has not felt welcomed. Words of advice- extend yourself anyway.

CLOSURE/NEXT MEETING

The Moderator closed the meeting at 8:30pm. The next coalition meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 17, 7:00pm at the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Santos

Coalition Coordinator